

CLI Consumer Education Subgroup Activities

During Phase II, meetings of the subgroup occurred approximately every two or three weeks, mainly through conference calls. All members of the subgroup received advance notice of the calls, and future meetings were tentatively scheduled during these calls. An average of more than a dozen participants attended these calls. Participants discussed the concept and need for an education campaign logo, slogan, materials to be used for consumer education, media venues, and strategic plans. Feedback from all participants was always encouraged; whenever possible, Stakeholder opinions were weighed heavily in making decisions. After the September 1998 Partner and Task Force meeting, the Subgroup was divided up into smaller groups targeting message development for consumer education materials, the placement of the consumer education materials, and the development of a consumer education campaign logo. Based on recommendations from the meeting, Partners were asked to encourage the participation of key marketing personnel from their organizations.

The Consumer Education Subgroup conceptualized, developed, and began implementing a broad-based, long-range consumer education plan intended to help people to read, understand, interpret, and use label information. The Subgroup developed an easily understood message—"Read the Label *FIRST!*"—and, at the time this report went to press, was in the process of developing a unique, memorable, consumer-friendly logo. The Subgroup also drafted text for outreach brochures targeting gardeners, children's health, pet protection, and household products, that was presented at a Partner and Task Force meeting in April 1999. The various components of the campaign will be designed to work with and reinforce each other.

Components of the Consumer Education Plan

The EPA and its CLI Partner and Task Force members intend to begin implementing the consumer education effort in Spring 2000 with the public launch of the nationwide "Read the Label *FIRST!*" campaign. This launch is timed to coincide with the appearance of newly redesigned labels on store shelves and with the consumers' general interest in seasonal gardening and cleaning activities. Eventually, the Consumer Education Subgroup intends to finalize and make available to the public a variety of materials, possibly including but not necessarily limited to the following:

- # brochures or flyers for a general consumer audience, pet owners, parents, and gardeners;
- # posters;
- # a fact sheet on label changes resulting from the CLI;
- # camera-ready logos; and
- # a publicity guidance document outlining a variety of cost-effective ways to use the Campaign's logo, slogans, taglines, brochures, and other materials.

To make the Campaign materials useful to as many organizations as possible, the Consumer Education Subgroup hopes to make the materials available in easy-to-use formats. Restrictions on how organizations may use the materials will be minimized.

At this point in time, the Consumer Education Subgroup expects to use a variety of methods to announce and distribute materials for the Campaign, potentially including the following:

- # sending camera-ready materials to all CLI Partners, Task Force Members, and Consumer Education Subgroup members, via regular mail and e-mail;
- # distributing materials to trade associations for certain audiences (e.g., the national Parent-Teacher Association);
- # distributing materials through product manufacturers (who often provide information at point of purchase, via mailings, etc.);
- # posting of materials on the CLI website, available for downloading; and
- # mailing press releases and information packets to appropriate organizations.

To be effective, consumer education needs to be directed toward identified needs. Therefore, the work to be implemented by the Consumer Education Subgroup depends on decisions and recommendations made by other CLI subgroups. Findings from other components of the CLI have and will continue to feed into the work of the Consumer Education Subgroup.

The intent of the Campaign is to have consistent, mutually reinforcing messages targeting specific consumer audiences and originating from all CLI participants and interested groups. The “Read the Label *FIRST!*” message will thus come from government, industry, health, environmental, and consumer groups alike. The slogan and logo are designed to be accompanied by reasons why reading the label is important, addressing the main motivating factors for label reading that were identified in the quantitative and qualitative research. Child and pet safety, environmental benefits, and gaining the best value for money spent will feature among the top reasons to read labels and follow label directions.

Following its initial emphasis on getting consumers to notice and read labels, the intent of the CLI is to expand the Campaign to help people better understand the information that appears on labels. This would include education in the meaning and use of signal words (CAUTION, WARNING, DANGER), as well as information designed to teach people why environmental information and storage and disposal information — which research shows are among the least often read sections on the label — are important to the consumer.

The Consumer Education Subgroup has proposed a long-range Campaign designed to unfold, expand, and develop over a number of years, including nationally televised ads and educational curricula.

